

in what we trust Government to do, that is, the year President Reagan was elected.

So people have high aspirations for what they wish us to do, but they don't trust us to do much. And they're afraid we'll mess it up. So it's easy to derail almost any initiative by saying, well, this thing is wrong with it or that or the other thing. We are a people of—a democratic government requires some flexibility and compromise and people working together. And somehow, we've got to find a way to recreate that spirit. Now, it happened on the NAFTA debate, and it happened last week on crime in the House. It was wonderful to see these Democrats and Republicans sitting down together, cutting unnecessary spending, redirecting the programs, making sure we only told the American people we were going to spend what we could, in fact, spend from reducing the size of the Federal Government. That's what we need more of, that sort of thing.

Crime Legislation

Mr. Burns. George Stephanopoulos answered this question. I guess this is a test as to whether he's really reflecting what you believe as President of the United States. Why not break out the component parts of the crime bill? You and I both know that many of those components would fly through the Congress with no opposition—more police, more prisons. You might even win the assault weapons ban issue. Why doggedly say it's all or nothing?

The President. Well, for one thing, I'm not sure that it would all pass. There is an answer to that. The first answer is, the House adopted them separately and together. The Senate, 95 to 4, before this issue got politicized, voted for a crime bill that is very much like the crime bill now before it that is so far not being permitted to come to a vote—95 to 4. They voted for a bill that had prevention, punishment, prisons, police——

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:18 p.m. in Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building. The broadcast of this interview was terminated due to the station's scheduled 4:30 newscast.

Statement on the Observance of International Literacy Day

August 24, 1994

On International Literacy Day, I am delighted to salute the many men and women who work so diligently to empower all people with the invaluable ability to read.

If our world is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, we must harness the energy and creativity of all our citizens. Nearly half of American adults lack many of the basic literacy skills so essential to success in today's complex and ever-changing world. Literacy is not a luxury; it is a right and a responsibility. And in an international community increasingly dedicated to the principles of equality and opportunity, illiteracy is unacceptable.

It takes great courage and hard work to overcome illiteracy. But with the help of dedicated teachers, tutors, and volunteers, everyone can learn the joys of reading and writing. These caring partnerships are the essence of community service, bringing hope and inspiration to all of us.

As people around the world celebrate International Literacy Day, I stand with you in working toward the goal of universal literacy. I am proud to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the countless individuals whose tireless efforts are helping to put this dream within our grasp.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: International Literacy Day will be observed on September 8, 1994. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks on Crime Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

August 25, 1994

The President. Good afternoon. For 6 long years, the American people have watched and waited as Washington talked about stemming the tide of crime and violence in this country but did not act. Today Senators of both parties took a brave and promising step to bring the long, hard wait for a crime bill closer to an end.